

## Education and Youth Development: Community Forum – Feedback and Comments

On Tuesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at Friendship Public Charter School, Chamberlain Campus, about 30 members of the community came together to discuss key issues around education and youth development in the District of Columbia. Following a brief presentation led by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, attendees broke out into discussion groups. These groups were moderated by volunteers from District agencies, the CBO community, and the ODME. Below are notes summarizing the discussions and conversations around four key goals:

- 1) ***What would an “ideal” vision for this priority area look like?***
- 2) ***What is working already around this topic?***
- 3) ***What are key barriers or obstacles that exist to reaching the ideal vision?***
- 4) ***What do you suggest next steps or additional questions that should be discussed?***

### Early Childhood Education/Pre-K, Special Education & ESL/ELL

<p><b><i>Ideal Vision and Overview</i></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Early Childhood Education/Pre-K               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Focus on the community in need of the most support                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Parenting skills</li> <li>ii) Physical and emotional support</li> </ol> </li> <li>b) Pre-natal support</li> <li>c) Focus on the infant</li> <li>d) Lay a foundation for future learning</li> <li>e) Provide access to services and empower parents                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Through the native language</li> </ol> </li> <li>f) Positive experiences or students earlier on</li> <li>g) Improve the <i>quality</i> of services</li> <li>h) All parents should be educated about pre-natal issues and early childhood development</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Special Education               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Early and timely identification of students in need of services</li> <li>b) Coordination between service providers and families as well as other professionals</li> <li>c) Reconfigure the public spaces to integrate disabled and non-disabled students</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) General Feedback               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) More after school programs</li> <li>b) Coordinate services so that students can get everything they need within the District</li> <li>c) Identify what supports and services are needed                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Problems with current services:                       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Inadequate</li> <li>(2) In unsafe areas</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>d) Close the gaps                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Achievement gap</li> <li>ii) Gap in <i>safe</i> services</li> </ol> </li> <li>e) Ideally, parents would be fully engaged in their schools and trust their schools’ competence level</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f) Schools should help parents identify out-of-school resources</li> <li>g) Continuing education for service providers</li> </ul>
<b><i>What is Working Already?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Early Childhood Education/Pre-K <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) OSSE – good foundation for children and families in terms of access to Pre-K</li> <li>b) Blending Model</li> <li>c) Early Stages</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Special Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Commitment to community-based programming</li> <li>b) Better awareness of policies and procedures from OSSE</li> </ul> </li> <li>3) General Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Mentoring program</li> <li>b) Therapy in school</li> <li>c) Relationships with staff</li> <li>d) Reward system</li> <li>e) Parental engagement</li> <li>f) OSSE's professional developments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>Key Obstacles</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Professional development not being taken advantage of</li> <li>2) Birth through age 3 not a priority</li> <li>3) Transitions between different systems</li> <li>4) Structural vs. Communication Barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Need to be identified</li> <li>b) Differences need to be made clear</li> </ul> </li> <li>5) Allocation of funds toward early education that may be able to save special education funding lab</li> <li>6) Demographic shifts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Language barriers for Latino youth</li> </ul> </li> <li>7) Labeling for services</li> </ul>
<b><i>Further Questions/ Next Steps</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) More parents need to be at the table</li> <li>2) Improve parental involvement and coordination</li> <li>3) Connect with direct service providers and coalitions</li> <li>4) Identify the heads of relevant coalitions</li> <li>5) Higher education – model after Louisiana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Teacher quality being tied to schools that are administering credentials</li> </ul> </li> <li>6) The new healthcare legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Intersecting Department of Health</li> <li>b) Assessment after 9 months</li> <li>c) Look at school readiness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Truancy Dropouts, Disconnected Youth & Alternative Education

<b><i>Ideal Vision and Overview</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Truancy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Students not in school vs. chronic truancy</li> <li>b) Students over 15 years of age</li> <li>c) Look at barriers to attending or staying in school</li> <li>d) Every youth should have someone who cares</li> <li>e) Motivate youth during middle school</li> <li>f) Create a vision for after high school starting at freshman year</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Disconnected Youth <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 16-24 are currently not connected to work, school, or adults</li> <li>b) There should be intensive case management and wrap around services</li> <li>c) Available resources to quickly access</li> <li>d) Beds for homeless youth</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) Alternative Education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Meeting everyone's needs, even through non-traditional schools</li> <li>b) Transition case manager</li> <li>c) Marketing to improve awareness of programs</li> <li>d) Increase 18-24 capacity</li> <li>e) College isn't the only option</li> <li>f) PCSB authorize alternative schools</li> <li>g) Small classrooms</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) Programs and Organizations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) DPW – autobody program</li> <li>b) Phelps – CTE programs</li> <li>c) STAY program</li> <li>d) Key Club</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b><i>What Is Working Already?</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Truancy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Byer model</li> <li>b) MPD enforcing truancy</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Disconnected Youth <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) We have a wealth of resources</li> <li>b) Role models</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) Alternative Education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Phelps</li> <li>b) STAY outreach</li> <li>c) Technical schools</li> <li>d) YouthBuild</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<b>Key Obstacles</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Must provide more for 18-24 year olds               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Sensitivity training</li> <li>b) Understanding by faculty members</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) WMATA/transit's role               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Neighboring jurisdictions</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) Lack of training/school priorities</li> <li>4) Outreach</li> <li>5) Motivation</li> <li>6) Kids coming out of child welfare</li> <li>7) Metrics               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Internal validity issues                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) What are we actually measuring and how</li> <li>ii) Is it taking the focus off of the youth</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Further Questions/Next Steps</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Mental health</li> <li>2) Parents</li> <li>3) Interconnectedness of all three of these issues</li> <li>4) Trade schools and charter schools</li> <li>5) Unions</li> <li>6) Transit police</li> <li>7) Child welfare missing</li> </ol>

### Health

<b>Ideal Vision and Overview</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Offer to all what anyone would want for his/her own children</li> <li>2) Accessibility – services need to be where families are physically located</li> <li>3) Address mental health of youth and families</li> <li>4) The definition of health must be broad enough to include mental health</li> <li>5) Public campaign to normalize mental health services               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Work to minimize the stigma</li> </ol> </li> <li>6) School-based health centers</li> <li>7) Playgrounds at every elementary/middle schools</li> <li>8) What happened to health, dental, hearing, and vision screenings across the board?</li> </ol>
<b>What Is Working Already?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Merging systems of care</li> <li>2) Building partnerships in funding across agencies</li> <li>3) Campaign to limit obesity and improve health</li> <li>4) Push for fresh fruits and vegetables in school</li> <li>5) Community connections</li> <li>6) Jumpstart</li> <li>7) Playworks</li> </ol>

<b>Key Obstacles</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Information <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Database with accurate and quality information</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Principals and personnel</li> <li>3) Funding</li> <li>4) Willingness of consumers to utilize services and/or share information</li> <li>5) Physical environment to ensure accessibility</li> <li>6) Lack of awareness among parents about children's issues</li> <li>7) Lack of playgrounds</li> <li>8) Safety <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To, from, and in schools</li> <li>b) Metal detectors</li> <li>c) Lighting</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Further Questions/Next Steps</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reviews of community agencies (possibly online)</li> <li>2) Family engagement</li> <li>3) Who needs to be at the table: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Parents</li> <li>b) Health providers (including mental health providers)</li> <li>c) School stakeholders and leaders</li> <li>d) Religious leaders – access to family crisis</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) More is needed from the Department of Health to provide outreach and information</li> <li>5) Data and studies to show needs and their effects on youth and education</li> </ol>

### **In-School Time**

<b>Ideal Vision and Overview</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Motivated kids</li> <li>2) The teacher-student relationship is key <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Improve communication</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) Consideration of different career interests <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Interdisciplinary method</li> <li>b) Different learning styles and interests</li> <li>c) Not solely college-oriented, but also skills-oriented</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) Students must have access to programs</li> <li>5) Time for social and emotional learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Time during the school day to develop social and emotional skills</li> <li>b) Utilize evidence-based curricula</li> </ol> </li> <li>6) Meaningful internship programs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Prepare for careers</li> <li>b) Opportunities for earning income</li> </ol> </li> <li>7) Healthy nutrition habits</li> </ol>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Connection between food and learning</li> <li>8) Wide variety of educational options</li> <li>9) Concrete information for parents on what's working</li> <li>10) Eliminate what is not working</li> <li>11) Meet the diverse needs of disconnected students</li> </ul>
<b><i>What Is Working Already?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Career institute program as an elective for students</li> <li>2) Full-time mental health counselors in schools</li> <li>3) Using what students know to teach concepts and lessons               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Innovative approaches</li> </ul> </li> <li>4) Pre-K</li> <li>5) Catalyst schools</li> <li>6) School choice</li> <li>7) Increase in college awareness – double the numbers</li> <li>8) Sharing best practices</li> <li>9) Reductions in achievement gap</li> <li>10) City starting to measure data about education</li> <li>11) Writing programs improving writing skills</li> <li>12) Culturally-sensitive instruction</li> </ul>
<b><i>Key Obstacles</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Training for teachers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Integrate collaboration within and among schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Mental health services exist in only some schools</li> <li>3) Funding</li> <li>4) Outreach to parents               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Lack of outreach limits the impact of programs and opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>5) Lack of coordination among agencies and organizations               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Charter/DCPS/OSSE collaboration</li> </ul> </li> <li>6) There are only pockets of success and innovation but a lack of high-level coordination</li> <li>7) Old ideas and myths about various sectors in DC</li> <li>8) Not clear space at schools for parents to be involved</li> <li>9) Time               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Not enough time in the school day</li> <li>b) Not enough time for collaboration</li> </ul> </li> <li>10) Capacity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Need more people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>Further Questions/Next Steps</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Who needs to be at the table:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) More parents</li> <li>b) More students – of all types</li> <li>c) Community members</li> <li>d) Policy makers</li> <li>e) Media – show them the positive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f) People not connected to schools in any way – other youths</li> <li>2) Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Qualitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Are we meeting the needs of people we engage</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Transparency – ease of access to schools and information</li> </ul> </li> <li>3) Food and childcare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Timing important <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Go to Saturday programs</li> <li>ii) Vary timing to increase opportunity</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### **Post-Secondary/Higher Education**

<b><i>Ideal Vision and Overview</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Full knowledge of landscape and alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) College, military, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Family and school reinforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Academic advisors</li> </ul> </li> <li>3) Local colleges – direct connections to high schools</li> <li>4) Have the culture of college instilled at an early age</li> <li>5) History of achievement and success – 50's and 60's</li> <li>6) Universal college education for those who want it</li> <li>7) Broad exposure to a wide variety of both traditional and non-traditional professions</li> </ul>
<b><i>What Is Working Already?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Wealth of resources (CBO's, etc.)</li> <li>2) Successful CBO/school partnerships</li> <li>3) Double the Numbers</li> </ul>
<b><i>Key Obstacles</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Parent engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Families as the primary focus of change</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Student buy-in</li> <li>3) Financial burden of going to school</li> <li>4) Quality of education</li> <li>5) Peer pressure</li> <li>6) Youth violence and gang pressures</li> <li>7) Funding</li> </ul>
<b><i>Further Questions/Next Steps</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Parent support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Family literacy</li> <li>b) Nutrition programs</li> <li>c) Full employment for entire family</li> <li>d) Road map to success</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Is focusing on college alternatives undermining a college-going culture?</li> <li>3) Do we drop the ball when we push young people into community colleges without a plan for the aftermath?</li> </ul>